New Year 1944

Sel 27

Good-bye, 1933.

INTRO. Because the committe in charge of our church bulletin demanded of me the subject of my morning sermon, I could'nt think of any and so I almost jokingly stated that it would be,"Good-bye, 1933." Having chosen my theme, I shall try to stick to it.

Good-bye, 1933. This is a farewell to the old year. Some time ago I preached a sermon on the word "Good-bye", bringing out the fact that it is a contraction of "God be with ye", I shall frankly endeavor to link God with the year that is closing for I believe that God speaks to us thru the past because He is in the past as well as in the present and future.

Now that 1933 has become a part of our past and has become an alumnus of the long ago, our contact with it must necessarily be one of remembrance, and our view of it must be that of historical perspective, largely. In exercising the historical perspective we relegate much of the details to oblivion and remember only the outstanding experiences that have left indelible impressions and that seem to guide us from the present into the future.

Since 1933 is still fresh to our minds, we uhdoubtedly remember many instances of sunshine and shadow. It may be you have been crushed by a great sorrow. It may be you have been filled with a great joy. Or it may be that events have moved for you so gradually and silently that the changes wrought have been hardly noticable. But surely, if you give ample thot to the matter, you cannot but realize God has tested and tried your hearts and that the year cannot be reviewed without experiencing a deep sense of the Eternal and of God's goodness and mercy.

But afterall, ~~///~~ our remembrances of the past year are but a very small fraction of what has happened. We cannot recall most of the thots that flashed thru our minds. ~~Even~~ Even most of our actions we cannot recall, and a large part of our reading is lost to memory. God has so made us that we remember much but forget infinitely more. Thank God for the gift of forgetfulness. In saying farewell to 1933, I want to show you what a blessing it is that we are made to forget, that this is one of God's ministries of His divine love to us.

I. First, our forgetting may be only temporary. We know how a sudden experience may make us remember something we had forgotten, for years perhaps. A drowning man may live his whole life over in a few seconds of time. Martha thot her brother dead when he was only sleeping. Our past does not vanish like shadows, but rather like objects on the desert buried under sands, only to be uncovered again by subsequent winds. Incidents long forgeotten are frequently revived. Indeed, some thinkers claim that we really forget nothing. This temporary forgetting is a part of God's loving providence for the immediate comfort of his children. "We cannot see the forest for the trees."

II. God also makes us forget in order to give us clearer spiritual vision. Remember Christ's use use of the expression, "that seeing, they may not see"? Well, the opposite is also true, namely, "that not seeing ye may see the more clearly." We are more often blind, not because we see too little but because we see too much. We often lose the import and the joy of the whole by getting lost in the details.

Take the artist, i.e. Every rough line on his canvass is needed to express what is in his soul, but it is not these detailed touches that enables the viewer to grasp the significance of the picture, for one must stand back until the rough ~~lines~~

blotches of paint blend to portray the outstanding subject matter of the painting. And so it is with life. God sinks into oblivion the myriad details in order that we may the more clearly see the whole for which the parts are made. God makes us to forget so that all that is large and vital may stand forth clearly in our thinking.

A great sorrow strikes us- its immediate details blind us, and then come the quiet days which give us our true bearings. Thus it is that our life grows richer by seeing the larger meanings of our providences, after we have submerged the accidental details and behold the purpose of the Divine artist.

III. With equal force this principle of forgetting applies to character. It is by forgetting as much as by remembering that we gain a true insight into those whom we love.

What would'nt we give for more details of the life of Christ!. What must Mary, the mother of Jesus, have known about her boy that never got into the records'. Even John must have known a great deal more about his master than he wrote for our reading. I boldly make the statement that we see Christ more clearly with what records we have than we possibly could had every detail of his life been recorded. We have enough to see God, to see a Savior, to see divine truth so clearly that even a child can find the heart of the Heavenly Father.

This applies also to our great men. Take Washington and Lincoln, I.E. The details of their lives are lost in the splendor of their sublime character and service to the world.

To give a mre recent illustration. The case of Rev.Wintler and Mr.Hoag. The card of comfort signed by Mr. and Mrs.Hoag.

Yes, God causes us to forget the faults and the failings of others in order that what is tenderest and deepest and best may at length shine upon us undimmed.

IV. Forgetfulness is also necessary to our happiness. This need explanation.

A child lives in the future most of the time. Its greatest pleasures come to him through anticipations. He is always looking forward to the next Chrstmas, to his next birthday or to the next holiday from school. To-day may be full of tears, but there is no sorrow in a child's to-morrow.

But as the years roll on and the shadows fall a great change takes place. The solace of the future grows feebler and there arises a solace from the past. Why is this so with so many of us? I can think of no better answer than that God, enriching us with tender memories, also casts over us the mantle of forgetfulness.

If we remembered every shower of rain, we would lose sight of the sun behind the clouds. If we remembered every little ache we suffered, the peace of the old days would vanish. If we reealled every mood and feeling, every misunderstanding for the moment, the solace of recollection would be gone. By thus forgetting our past takes on a golden hue and we joy in the glowing sunset of all that was good and true and noble and kind.

V. This forgetfulness of past details also gives us courage for the future, and makes the present sublime.

Nor do I mean that we must forget everything of the past. There are some things we cannot forget and there are many things we ought not to forget. When David faced Goliath his remembrance of how he slew the lion and the bear gave him courage for the immediate action at hand. And there is not one of us to-day but ~~that~~ would have heart and hope for the New Year if we would but think of all that God has done for us in the past. Just as a moner washes away the gravel and keeps the gold

so we should gather up out of our past all we have found of God in our lives. And when we do this, and see God's goodness and blessings upon us, we are made valiant for to-morrow.

But there is more than God in our past. There is self and there is sin and shortcoming. What of the wasted years of our lives? What of the wasted hours of 1933? Suppose we saw ourselves and our actions thru God's eyes, would not every bird cease to sing for us, would not the very sun cease to shine upon us? Why, we would be crushed! But God loves us and would not have us thus overpowered He would not have us to be cowards at the trumpet call. God does not tie us to a dead past by the appalling memory of sin and failure. He comes to-day and says to us in his mercy, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." It is because God loves us and believes in us that he touches us with the mercy of oblivion. He wants us to be free to face the future heavenward. He loves us.

Good-bye, 1933! God bless you, 1933! Forgetting the things that are past and pressing forward to the things that are before, stretching let us press on to the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus!

College girl hanging up Calendar for the New Year "It is going to be a beautiful day" How do you know? asked her Roommate "Well, she replied, "A day is not a long time, and I know it is going to be beautiful because I am going to live a day at a time and make it so that every one of those 365 days gets at least one beautiful thing into it through my efforts."